



# Policy Insider

A biweekly webinar series on federal and intergovernmental policy.

May 21, 2026

## Appropriations

- House has begun releasing their FY 2027 appropriations bills
- Senate has yet to act on federal funding
- Stay up to date with NACo's new FY 2027 appropriations tracker



*Scan to visit NACo's FY 2027 appropriations tracker*

## Surface Transportation Reauthorization

- On May 17, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chair Sam Graves (R-Mo.) and Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-Wash.) introduced the *BUILD America 250 Act* (H.R. 8870).
- This bipartisan bill would reauthorize surface transportation reauthorization programs at the U.S. Department of Transportation for five years, setting new levels for funding and enacting policy changes.
- The bill contains several provisions aligned with bills supported by NACo and that reflect county priorities, including the *BASICS Act*, the *FLAP Reauthorization Act* and the *Safe Streets Reauthorization and Improvement Act*



QR Code for NACo's *BUILD America 250 Act* Blog

## Major County Win - Bridge Funding

- One of NACo's top priorities, included in the *BASICS Act* (H.R. 7437), was an increase in funding for local bridges. Counties own 38 percent of America's bridges, but our bridges are more than twice as likely to be in poor condition than state-owned bridges.
- The IIJA's "Bridge Formula Program" had a 15-percent set-aside for "off-system" bridges, or bridges not on the federal-aid highway system.
- This is often regarded as a set-aside for local governments, since many off-system bridges are owned by local governments. However, state DOTs also own off-system bridges, and local governments own many on-system bridges.
- This creates a moderate level of access, but NACo has been pushing for more funding and a better process for local bridges



QR Code for NACo's *BUILD America 250 Act* Blog

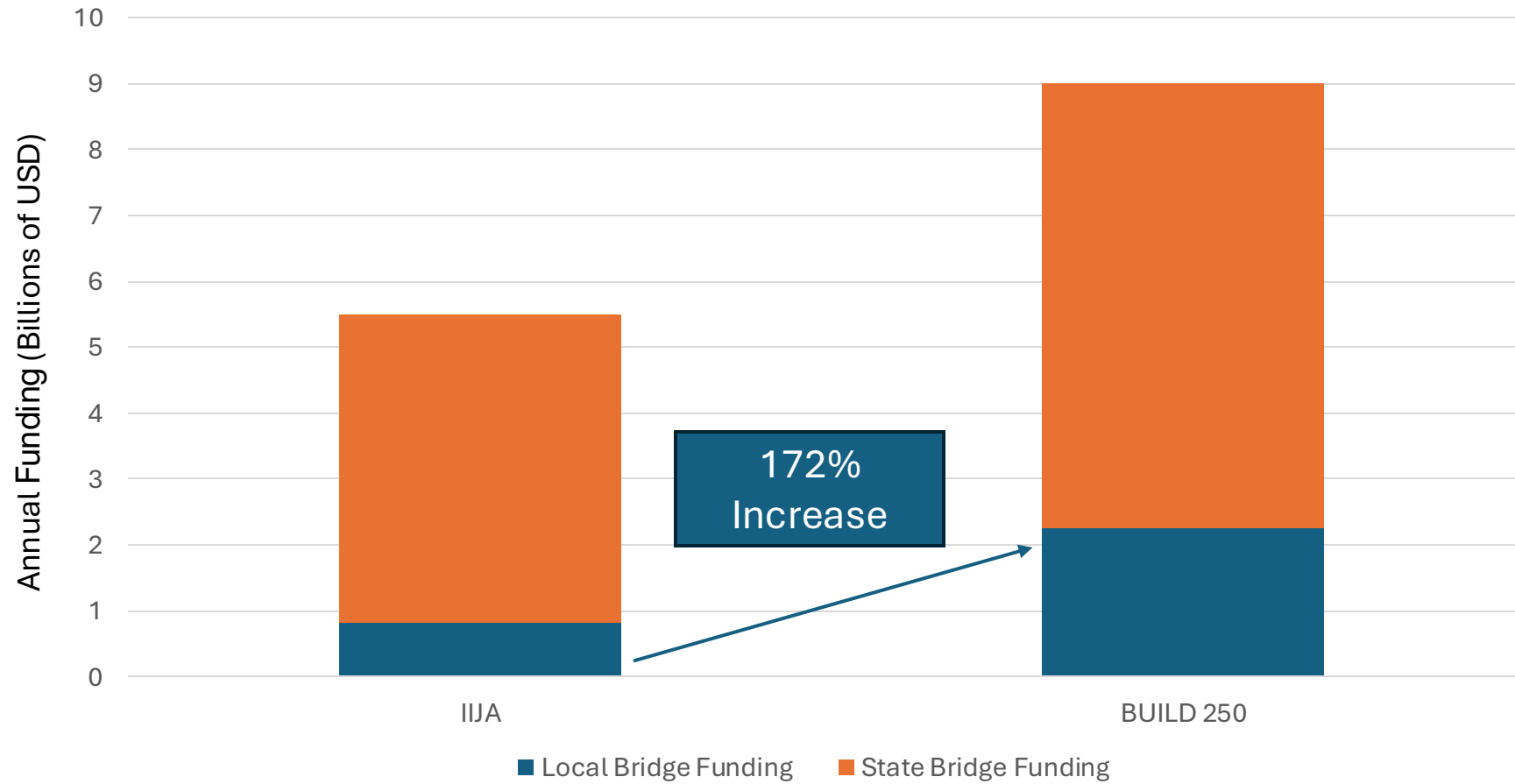
## Major County Win - Bridge Funding

- The *BASICS Act* pushed to grow the local bridge share to 25 percent and move away from the set-aside model to a suballocation model akin to what happens with STBG funding
- The *BUILD America 250 Act* follows the lead set by the *BASICS Act* and proposes that 25 percent of funding under its continued bridge formula program go toward “locally owned bridges”
- The *BUILD America 250 Act* also grows the bridge program from \$5.5 bn per year to \$9 bn per year
- The locally owned set-aside will go out via a state-run competitive program, where states are required to balance funds between urban and rural applicants
- Lastly, the *BUILD America 250 Act* makes the cost-share for locally owned bridges 95 percent federal



QR Code for NACo's *BUILD America 250 Act* Blog

## Local Bridge Funding in IIJA vs. BUILD 250



## Other Key Wins for Counties in *BUILD 250*

The *BUILD America 250 Act* includes many other priorities that NACo has been pushing for:

- Grows the STBG program, which suballocates funding
- Retention of key discretionary grant opportunities like the Safe Streets & Roads for All (SS4A) program and the new Surface Transportation Accelerator Grant (STAG) program
- Increased funding for public lands transportation programs like FLAP and the Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects program
- Continued investments in public transit systems, many of which are owned or operated by counties
- Rail safety provisions, including funding for grade separation projects and rail bridge reporting portals



QR Code for NACo's *BUILD America 250 Act* Blog



## Continued Areas Omissions

The *BUILD America 250 Act* does not include all the provisions that counties pushed for and also included some policies we oppose.

- There was no guaranteed funding in the bill for RTPOs, no provisions encouraging the formation of RTPOs and no changes to consultation requirements between state DOTs and RTPOs or rural counties. This had been a core ask of NACo.
- The bill includes several new allowances for increased truck sizes and weights (TSW) for certain industries in certain states. There will also be amendment votes to create a 91,000-lb. pilot program for TSW and one to blanket increase TSW rules for auto-haulers. NACo opposes both.
- The bill would also allow the federal government to preempt state and local governments on regulating autonomous commercial vehicles



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## NACo Support for the Bill



May 19, 2026

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Chair  
Committee on Transportation  
& Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation &  
Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Graves and Ranking Member Larsen,

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo), which represent counties, boroughs and parishes, we write to express our strong support for the *BUILD America 250 Act*. We are deeply grateful for your bipartisan leadership in negotiating and introducing this legislation, and we commend the Committee for its commitment to a bill that reflects the priorities of county governments nationwide.

Counties are major stakeholders in our nation's surface transportation infrastructure, with 70 percent of public road miles and 38 percent of bridges in the United States, and 70 percent of public transit systems. Every year, counties spend more than \$146 billion in infrastructure, demonstrating our commitment to doing so in a way that is safe, reliable, efficient and safe.

However, we cannot do this alone. Counties rely on our intergovernmental technical assistance and other support that increase counties' capacity to manage and maintain the network. The federal government is one of these intergovernmental partners, and a surface transportation reauthorization bill a vital piece of legislation for our country.

Similarly, we will continue to engage with your Committee and the Committee on Energy & Commerce on autonomous vehicle provisions. This emerging technology has real potential to benefit our communities, but we believe that it will be most effective if county and other intergovernmental voices are included in regulatory and other decision-making processes.

With less than five months until the expiration of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, it is important that Congress move quickly to advance a strong, multi-year reauthorization bill. Counties strongly support the *BUILD America 250 Act* and stand ready to work with both chambers to pass a final bill that makes the investment and policy changes needed to build a transportation system that serves our shared residents and businesses.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Chase  
CEO/Executive Director  
National Association of Counties

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STRONGER COUNTIES. STRONGER AMERICA.



QR Code to Read NACo's Support Letter for *BUILD 250*



# Policy Insider

## What Comes Next

The *BUILD America 250 Act* is actively being marked up in the U.S. House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee as we speak

Should it be approved, as we expect, it would then move to the full chamber for consideration

In the Senate, none of the three respective committees of jurisdiction—the Committee on Environment & Public Works, the Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation and the Committee on Banking & Urban Affairs—have put out their base text

NACo is asking House members to support the *BUILD America 250 Act* and asking Senators to push for provisions like those in *BUILD America 250* in their respective base texts



QR Code for NACo's Surface  
Transportation Reauthorization  
Hub

## Housing Reform Update

- On May 20, the House passed an amended version of the *21st Century ROAD to Housing Act* (H.R. 6644), which previously passed the Senate in March
- The bill reflects several key changes that NACo advocated for in the Senate version
- The major changes found in the House bill include:
  1. Removal of Build Now Act
  2. Relaxes Senate restrictions on institutional investors in the housing market
  3. CDBG-DR falls out
  4. BABA study returns
  5. Limiting duplicative environmental reviews



*Scan to learn more about the amended housing package*

## Housing Reform: Build Now Act

- **In the Senate bill:**
  - Ties CDBG allocations to housing growth performance
  - Carrot vs. stick: 10 percent penalty OR prorated bonus
  - Moderate exemptions:
    - Supply and demand; zoning control; one-year emergency lookback
  - County concerns:
    - Predictable funding is critical for multi-year projects; ignores nuances in zoning authority; ignores local development capacity/unique land use challenges; CDBG supports housing activities: why limit this?
- **In the revised House bill:**
  - Removes Build Now altogether
  - Requires CDBG grantees to maintain database of publicly owned land

## Housing Reform: Large Institutional Investors

- **In the Senate bill:**
  - Bans Large Institutional Investors (LII) from owning more than 350 single-family homes
  - White House priority
  - Exempts Built-to-rent (BTR) properties from 350-unit cap
  - However, an LII is required to divest from any exempt properties within 7 years (plus a potential three-year tenant opt-in period)
  - County Concerns:
    - Tenant displacement; supply constraints; administrative hurdles?
- **In the revised House bill:**
  - Maintains purchasing ban
  - Fully exempts BTR
  - Adds tenant hotline

## Additional Changes

- **Removes the Senate provision institutionalizing the CDBG-Disaster Recovery (DR) program**
  - Appropriations lag vs. permanent authorization
  - Jurisdictional tug-of-war in House?
- **Reinstates the HUD review of Build America, Buy America (BABA) requirements on HOME projects**
  - Original House text fully exempted HOME projects from BABA
  - Fell out in prior Senate version
- Reinstates language eliminating duplicative environmental review requirements for HOME projects

## Housing Reform: What's Next

- **Key forces:**
  - White House blessing?
  - Conference window passed?
  - Limited floor time
- NACo **supports** the House Bill and encourages counties to reach out to their Senators
- NACo has developed a template letter for county use when reaching out
- **Call your Senator!**



Scan the QR code to find  
your Senator



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